

# The Cardinal

AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2019 WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

## “Common Tern Habitat Restoration”

with **Martha Minchak**

Thursday, September 12, 2019

The Common Tern, it turns out, is not so common in Minnesota. These sea birds nest in only two places in the Lake Superior watershed – and one of these places is in danger.

Interstate Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is approximately 6 acres in size and located in the Duluth Harbor (St Louis River Estuary). The island was created from material that was dredged from the shipping channel in the 1930s. Due to current historically high water levels in the estuary, the island is experiencing unprecedented flooding and the entire tern colony is now threatened.

September’s speaker Martha Minchak, an assistant wildlife manager in this area of the state, will discuss her work in restoring the island’s valuable nesting habitat for colonial nesting birds including the Common Tern, which is currently a threatened species in Minnesota.

Restoration work on the island will restore the island’s elevation and footprint to something more

closely resembling its original condition. Come and learn about the restoration project, and how the tern colony is being managed to allow maximum success for these birds, as well as other nesting and migratory species.

Martha Minchak has a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife management from the University of MN – Twin Cities. She has worked for the MN DNR for over 30 years and currently works as an assistant area wildlife manager for the Cloquet area, stationed in Duluth. Arrive at 6:45 for social time or 7:00 for the program; held at Fairview Community Center, 1910 Cty Rd B, Roseville. *Free and open to the public.*



## Audubon Center of the North Woods celebrates 50 years

In 1969, the Audubon Center of the North Woods was established near Sandstone, Minnesota. SPAS was one of three metro Audubon Societies to provide the initial funding in 1971 to hire an operations director to get the ACNW functioning. This year from June 14-16, over 150 supporters and alumni from many states and four countries came to the center to celebrate 50 years of protecting and restoring the land.

Speakers at the celebration provided a wealth of information about ACNW’s accomplishments over the past five decades. The center began offering environmental education in 1971, and now has provided programming to over 270,000 people ranging from kindergarteners to Road Scholar participants.

ACNW staff and volunteers have restored wetlands,



**Bryan Wood, executive director of ACNW, provides an overflow crowd with information on the Center’s educational activities and planned future activities.**

reclaimed a farm field, added an oak savannah, and seeded a prairie. Speakers at the celebration also emphasized a number of projects to increase sustainability, including the use of sun-tracking solar and solar water heaters for the facilities. The next big project will be developing an integrated farm that will allow the center to grow much of its own food, including fruit and nut trees and animals.

In addition to being one of the initial supporters of ACNW, SPAS has provided periodic support to allow children from the East Metro to attend programming. The celebration also gave SPAS an opportunity to a representative from the National Audubon Society about chapter needs.

SPAS congratulates Audubon Center of the North Woods on their 50 years of

advancing environmental projects, including many that benefit birds.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The Chapter's Board Meetings are held the first Monday of most months 6:30-8:00 P.M. at the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed Office, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada.

Upcoming: **Monday, Sept. 9**

### *President's Message*

I was attracted to the Saint Paul Audubon society in part because it is an all-volunteer organization. There is no staff or overhead and we get a lot accomplished with very little money. We have over 2,000 members and quite a few of those volunteer on our projects. I don't know exactly how many we have because I have never seen a full count of volunteers. People like to work on our projects because they can make a difference, help in a worthy environmental effort, meet some new friends or hang out with current ones and have fun.

We should recognize people for their contributions to birds and to the Society, especially those who have made sustained commitments. Unfortunately, I don't think we have been very good at recognizing contributions. Part of the problem is that SPAS has so many activities and is so decentralized. Volunteer activities range from conservation projects such as counting birds and butterflies, habitat projects such as building and installing blue bird houses and Landscape Revival, education of youth and adults, field trips, securing speakers, and keeping members informed by writing, editing and mailing *The Cardinal* and hosting meetings to make people feel welcome. We can see great results from these efforts but — when things are running smoothly — often the effort and number of people involved isn't obvious. So we need to make some effort to identify everyone and recognize their efforts. Years ago SPAS recognized people's efforts in *The Cardinal*. Today we sometimes recognize people at the monthly membership meetings, usually when they have decided to retire from their volunteer

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### ABOUT OUR CHAPTER

Founded in 1945 as the 'St. Paul Bird Club' with twelve members, the Saint Paul Audubon Society now serves the entire East Metro region of the Twin Cities, and has around 2,800 members. Our Member Meetings are held from Sept.-Dec. & Feb.-May on the second Thursday of the month. For more info please contact leaders at left, or visit [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org)

**ABOUT THE CARDINAL** Published 6 times a year; articles are due on the 5th of January, March, May, July, Sept, and Nov. Submissions may be edited. Send to [cardinalstpaul@gmail.com](mailto:cardinalstpaul@gmail.com).

Members may also receive the newsletter by downloading PDF's from our website.

**ADDRESS CHANGES** Call 1-800-274-4201 or NAS website at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) to notify the National Audubon Society of a change of address, to continue to receive *Audubon Magazine* and *The Cardinal*.

activity.

We need to develop a system where we can better acknowledge all our volunteers. I would like to find a way to acknowledge people when they are doing their volunteer work, not when they are finishing up. I also think we should make sure to include all volunteers. We on the board are thinking about this and would appreciate any suggestions you would have.

And thank you to all who are volunteering, putting in remarkable efforts, to help birds, the environment and Saint Paul Audubon Society. We all benefit from their work, so take a minute to thank them for their efforts!

### Minnesota Audubon Projects

The lead story in the Star Tribune of Sunday June 16 was about the restoration of the Mississippi River bottomlands. This is a project that Minnesota Audubon is deeply involved in. The Mississippi River of course is a critical flyway for many millions of birds. Over the years, the original canopy of mast producing trees such as oak and hickory was ravaged and lost. What has replaced it is mostly silver maple with an understory of invasive reed canary grass. To help birds on their journeys north and south the original canopy of seed and nut producing trees must be restored. Minnesota Audubon received grants from the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund, McKnight Foundation, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Aveda Corporation to remove some of the invasive grasses and silver maple and replant with mast producing trees. The focus of the Star Tribune story was along the Root River, but Audubon is working throughout the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Through its conservation projects, volunteers, grants and advocacy SPAS is supporting quality conservation work in Minnesota. Please come out to SPAS field trips and other activities and learn about how you can help Minnesota conservation, have fun, and meet new people!

-Donn Waage, SPAS President

## FIELD TRIPS

### Prairie Tuesdays (PT) Summer Walk Series

**Why prairies?** Birds need insects. Insects need food. Plants provide food for birds and insects. People, as well as needing food, thrive on the calm and beauty of natural places. The SPAS summer Tuesday evening prairie walks are designed to observe, comment on, and enjoy native prairie plant diversity. Each walk will have a secondary focus for discussion. We hope you will come to enjoy some delightful blooming prairie plants and some winged creatures that may visit them in these prairie gems! Bring your 10-power magnifier or borrow one from the leader. Consider a camera and bug repellent. Wear closed-toe shoes with socks above the ankle. No registration required. All trips led by Chase Davies 651-633-1663 RockyBirder@gmail.com

#### (PT #2) Valley View Park, Oak Park Heights

**Tuesday, August 13, 6:30-8:00 PM**

**WHY THIS PRAIRIE?** When seeking places for birding or botanizing, Washington County has many great choices. The restored prairie at Valley View Park is an excellent example of a quality, high-diversity, hillside prairie. The highest quality portion of the prairie overlooks the valley. The co-leader is Kathy Widin, former Oak Park Heights Arborist and leader for the St. Croix Oak Savanna Wild Ones.

**LOCATION** 5575 Ozark Ave N, Oak Park Heights, MN 55082

**TOPIC** Late summer blooming prairie - How has abundance and diversity of native plants impacted the local bird-life web?

**DIFFICULTY** Moderate. The walk starts downhill on blacktop surface through woodlands, then on turf, and finally up and down through woods on a compressed dirt trail to the prairie. Consider bringing a walking stick.

**DIRECTIONS** Going south from Hwy 36 on Osgood Avenue, continue beyond Upper 55th St. to the large sign on the left for Valley View Park.

#### (PT #3) Fish Creek Prairie at Sundown

**Tuesday, September 10, 6:30-8:00 PM**

**WHY THIS PRAIRIE?** Fish Creek has a lot going for it. Our prairie walk will show off a very comfortable, urban location undergoing well planned active restoration. We will focus on the prairie. However, there is also a wooded ravine which is especially nice for spring flowers and summer shade.

**LOCATION** Fish Creek Natural Area, 2465-2475 Carver Ave, Maplewood, MN 55119

**TOPIC** Autumnal falling temperatures with shortening days bring preparations for big changes to the local

bird-life web.

**DIFFICULTY** Easy

**DIRECTIONS** From I-94 and Century Avenue, go south about 3.5 miles to the end of Century where it turns west becoming Carver Avenue. Go west and immediately past I-494 turn south (right) onto Henry Lane. Travel about 1/2 mile to the Fish Creek Natural Area; turn around and park on the street as directed.

### Sandhill Cranes at Crex Meadows SWA Grantsburg, Wisconsin

**Tuesday, October 22, 4-8:15 PM**

Since historic times, Greater Sandhill Cranes have congregated by the thousands every autumn evening in the marshes and ponds now called Crex Meadows, located on the north side of Grantsburg, WI. People likewise gather to witness the sight of seemingly never ending strands and haunting sounds as the birds seek and settle into shelter for the night. Perhaps this is your year to experience anew or again this enduring ritual.

Meet at 4 PM at the Visitor Center (VC) at Crex Meadow State Wildlife Area in Grantsburg. We will talk briefly about the cranes, Crex, and carpooling and leave from the VC about 4:30 PM, returning about 8:15 to the same parking lot. The VC closes at 4:30 PM.

There might be a group carpooling opportunity from the Twin Cities leaving about noon; check with Louise Eidsmoe in early September if you are interested.

**DIRECTIONS** Take I-35 north to the Rock Creek/Grantsburg Exit (Highway 70), approximately 34 miles from Forest Lake. Take exit and turn right (EAST) on Highway 70. Follow for 15 miles (into Wisconsin) to the stoplight in Grantsburg. Turn left (NORTH) onto Pine Street. Follow the goose signs through town to the Visitor Center, located on the NE corner of the junction of County Rd D and County Road F. Meet in the VC parking lot at 4 PM.

**INSTRUCTIONS** Dress for cooling temperatures during the evening. Bring spotting scope if you have one, sunscreen, bug spray, and a brimmed hat. We will carpool from the Visitor Center.

**REGISTRATION** Register with Louise Eidsmoe: 651-231-0453 eidsmoel@comcast.net

**DIFFICULTY** Easy. We stay close to the cars so as not to spook the cranes.

**LEADERS**

Louise Eidsmoe 651-231-0453 eidsmoel@comcast.net  
Chase Davies 651-633-1663 RockyBirder@gmail.com

Be sure to check [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) for field trip changes throughout the season

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**SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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**Next issue: Oct./Nov. 2019**

**Deadline 9/5/2019**

Welcome...

To the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

We're a chapter of the  
National Audubon Society.

Our mission is to promote the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and other wildlife by engaging people of the East Metro in birding, education, and conservation.

*Please check our website at  
[www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org)  
for calendar updates!*

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**CALENDAR**

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**August**

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**September**

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Member Meeting: Martha Minchak .....12

**October**

Member Meeting: Bob Dunlap .....10

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## Your Input Needed on SPAS's Focus Areas

The SPAS Board is moving forward with the strategic planning process and the priorities for the next three years. The four focus areas chosen were education, conservation, policy/advocacy, and chapter structure. We are seeking input from members on the types of activities to pursue and how to be the best stewards of our time, volunteers, funds, and the upcoming savings from moving to an electronic newsletter.

Members rated education as the number one priority for the chapter in a survey last winter. What is the scope of our desired activities for education? Does this mean field trips for children, seminars for adult members, educating the general public on issues affecting birds and habitats, all of the above, or something else?

We also are looking for guidance from members on the extent of conservation efforts. Are there concerns about geographic limitations on our support? For example, is it acceptable to fund conservation in a South American habitat that is vital to birds that summer or migrate through here, are efforts in Wisconsin that support the Mississippi flyway OK, or do you only want conservation projects or research specifically in the East Metro? The newsletter for a FL conservation-related society says, "Efforts may extend beyond the Complex's borders and involve partnerships with like-minded conservation programs; " do we want a similar philosophy?

Please forward any comments and opinions to a board member, or use the "Leave Us a Message" form under the "Contact Us" tab on the SPAS webpage. We also are looking for members to help carry out these initiatives.